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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5873
INFO RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0092
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 001501

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR WHA/CCA AND WHA/CAR
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/29/2017
TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [CU](#) [BB](#) [XL](#)
SUBJECT: ANTIGUA-BARBUDA: SUSPENSION OF TITLE III OF THE
LIBERTAD ACT

REF: STATE 158768

Classified By: CDA Clyde I. Howard for reasons 1.4(B) and (d).

Summary

[¶1.](#) (C) Antigua and Barbuda enjoys a close relationship with Cuba. The Government of Antigua and Barbuda (GOAB) has publicly declared CARICOM's commitment to deepening their relationship further through increased bilateral collaboration and exchange in health, education, transportation, and science and technology. Antigua and Barbuda has also stepped up its rhetoric against USG policy toward human rights and democracy in Cuba within the last year, agreeing with the CARICOM consensus that the embargo is synonymous with international interference and a violation of sovereignty. End Summary.

Nature of Investments

[¶2.](#) (C) There are no known private sector investments in Cuba from Antiguan nationals.

Bilateral Trade Agreements

[¶3.](#) (U) Antigua and Barbuda's trade agreements with Cuba are mostly through CARICOM, of which Antigua and Barbuda is a member. In December 2005, CARICOM's "Declaration of Bridgetown" gave Cuba access to free trade in the region. While more a declaration than a detailed trade agreement, the agreement aimed to strengthen cooperation and build links in the areas of trade, education, health, culture and sports. The CARICOM-Cuba Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement was signed in July 2000, and provides for duty free access on certain goods and services in each territory. The agreement also provides for the adoption of common positions at international fora and the exchange of information and views on economic and social matters of mutual interest.

Health Exchange Programs

[¶4.](#) (U) The Government of Cuba's (GOC) "Operacion Milagro" is one of Cuba's most publicized programs in the Eastern Caribbean, especially in Antigua and Barbuda, where 900 people suffering from blindness have benefited from receiving an all-expense paid trip to Cuba for free cataract removal, cornea transplants, and/or glaucoma treatment, while over

13,000 people have been screened in Antigua under the program. Currently, the GOC is sending Cuban doctors to Antigua to perform these surgeries in-country. There are currently 140 Cuban personnel working in Antigua and Barbuda in health care. In Cuba, the GOC established a special medical facility, where more than 400 students from the Eastern Caribbean are being trained in the areas of mental health, clinical nursing, oncology care, dialysis care, health administration, and clinical pharmacology. Cuba also assisted in the development, equipping and staffing of a diagnostic center in Antigua with an intensive care unit, rehabilitation center, and ambulance. In addition, the GOC provided a power generation unit for an Antiguan hospital upgrade, along with operation rooms and equipment.

Democracy and Human Rights Promotion

¶6. (C) Antigua and Barbuda has done nothing to advance democracy and human rights in Cuba, but has instead shown solidarity with Cuba in international fora, particularly on matters related to the U.S. embargo. Antigua and Barbuda regularly votes to support pro-Cuba resolutions in the United Nations and almost never criticizes the Castro regime on its human rights record.

High-Level Visits -----

¶7. (U) The last known high-level visit between Cuba and Antigua and Barbuda occurred in May 2007 at the 45th OECS Heads of State Meeting in Grenada, where PM Spencer and his Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Colin Murdoch, met with Cuban Foreign Minister, Felipe Perez Roque and Cuban Ambassador to Antigua, Marcelino Fajardo, met on the margins to discuss cooperation between the two

countries in the areas of sports exchanges, medical programs, and aviation. In a public statement, PM Spencer declared that "the Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda thank the Government and people of the Republic of Cuba for their significant humanitarian gesture." Spencer also expressed his hope "for the full recovery of Cuban President Fidel Castro" and that he is "looking forward to an excellent working relationship."

¶8. (U) In February 2007, Minister of Tourism, Harold Lovell, Tourism Research and Planning Officer, Corthwright Marshall, Tourism Product Development Officer, Darlene Lay, Senior Assistant to the Minister, Elinor Oliver, and Tourism Communications Officer, Maria Blackman traveled to Cuba, where they sought technical assistance in tourism development. The Cuban Minister of Tourism, Manuel Marrero Cruz, agreed to assist with the restoration of cultural heritage sites in Antigua.

Comment -----

¶9. (C) Antigua and Barbuda and Cuba have had solid diplomatic relations for over thirty years and like other Eastern Caribbean states, consider each other "Caribbean brothers." In addition, Antigua and Barbuda's recent U.N. voting record on human rights and democracy indicates that Antigua and Barbuda does not support democracy and human rights in Cuba, where it is in Antigua and Barbuda's perceived economic and political best interests to consistently turn a blind eye.

HOWARD